AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) An isolated nucleic acid encoding an alkaline protease having an amino acid sequence which is at least 90% homologous to an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, wherein said isolated alkaline protease has alkaline protease activity.

8. (Previously Presented) A microorganism which is transformed with the nucleic acid of claim 7 and produces the alkaline protease.

9. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 8, which is a bacteria.

10. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 8, which is a yeast.

11. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 8, which is a fungus.

12. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 8, which is gram-positive.

13. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 8, which is gram-negative.

14. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 8, which is Eschericia coli.

15. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 8, which belongs to the genus Bacillus.

16. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 8, which belongs to the genus Saccharomyces.

17. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 8, which belongs to the genus Aspergillus.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) A method of producing the microorganism of claim 8, comprising transforming a microorganism with the nucleic acid.

20. (Previously Presented) A method of producing the alkaline protease of claim 7, comprising culturing a microorganism which produces the alkaline protease in a culture medium and then isolating the alkaline protease from the culture medium.

21. (Previously Presented) An isolated nucleic acid encoding an alkaline protease having an amino acid sequence which is at least 90% homologous to an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, wherein said isolated alkaline protease has alkaline protease activity.

22. (Previously Presented) A microorganism which is transformed with the nucleic acid of claim 21 and produces the alkaline protease.

23. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 22, which is a bacteria.

24. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 22, which is a yeast.

25. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 22, which is a fungus.

26. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 22, which is gram-positive.

27. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 22, which is gram-negative.

28. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 22, which is Eschericia coli.

29. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 22, which belongs to the genus Bacillus.

30. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 22, which belongs to the genus Saccharomyces.

31. (Previously Presented) The microorganism of claim 22, which belongs to the genus Aspergillus.

32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously Presented) A method of producing the microorganism of claim 22, comprising transforming a microorganism with the nucleic acid.

34. (Previously Presented) A method of producing the alkaline protease of claim 21, comprising culturing a microorganism which produces the alkaline protease in a culture medium and then isolating the alkaline protease from the culture medium.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

Claims 1-6 were previously canceled.

Claims 18 and 32 are canceled herein.

No new matter has been added by the present amendment.